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Some types of the loneliness of Jesus in the passion, 7 Lenten ...

Charles Walker



180



THE LONELINESS
OF JESUS



SOME TYPES
OF THE
LONELINESS OF JESUS
IN THE PASSION.

Seven Lenten Addresses

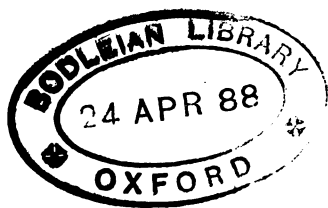
BY THE LATE
REV. CHAS. WALKER, M.A.,
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
1. INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS - - - - -	I
2. JACOB,—Type of Perseverance - - - - -	10
3. GIDEON,—Type of Courage - - - - -	19
4. SAMSON,—Type of Strength - - - - -	28
5. DAVID,—Type of Confidence - - - - -	38
6. JONAH,—Type of Self-Sacrifice - - - - -	48
7. THE TRIUMPH of JESUS' LONELINESS - - - - -	57

NOTICE.

THESE Addresses were not intended for publication, they were simply arranged for preaching; and contain quotations from other writers which now it would be difficult to specify, as six years have passed since they were first preached. With this apology the little book is offered, in the hopes that it may be some slight help to those who love to meditate on the Passion of their Saviour,

In Memoriam.

A MELANCHOLY interest attaches to this little publication, as it formed the last labour of love of the author, the Rev. C. Walker, who was called to his rest while its pages were passing through the press.

A brief notice of one lent to us, by the inscrutable Providence of God, for but a limited period, will, it is thought, not prove unacceptable to our readers. For short as his time had been, he had sown such seed by his ministrations, by his social and professional intercourse, and especially by the influence he exerted among the young, as had borne abundant fruit—such fruit indeed as forms the best memorial of his life.

Educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, he was ordained priest in 1864, and appointed to the curacy of St. Michael's, Brighton, and though he formally relinquished this post after two years, he continued to minister in the Church, almost until the time of his death, giving at all times such assistance as he could. His services were, however, by no means limited to this sphere, for he readily gave his help where it was wanted, devoting especially much of his

time and energy to the Sisterhood at St. Margaret's, East Grinstead, of which institution he was a generous and indefatigable supporter. Possessed of considerable attainments, of a genial nature, a striking preacher, a most accomplished musician, and learned in at least one branch of ecclesiastical lore, it was ever his aim and delight to use the talents God had given him, to His glory for the advancement of religion, his learning and unflinching courage being all freely employed in the service of the Church. Mr. Walker died at the comparatively early age of 46, deeply mourned by a large circle of friends, and of those who had been the objects of his Pastoral care, to whom he had been endeared by his unwearied kindness, and the deep interest he had taken in their welfare.

“The memory of the just is blessed.”

C. BEANLANDS.

S. MICHAEL'S, BRIGHTON,
August 25, 1887.

No. I.

Introductory Address.

Isaiah lxiii. 3.—“*I have trodden the winepress alone.*”

HUMAN Nature is, as a rule, most sympathetic in all cases of suffering. No tender human heart can hear or read of the suffering of a fellow-creature without a thrill of sympathy.

How deep that sympathy is when the sufferer is one for whom we feel esteem, affection, love—you surely know—having many times, doubtless, experienced this feeling. But, perhaps, there is no stimulus to sympathy so great, as the thought that the sufferer was isolated, desolate, alone !

The fact of the loneliness of a sufferer seems to aggravate the sorrow of the sympathizer, seems to magnify the pains the loved one has endured. Nay more: loneliness in suffering, when we hear of it as regards a *perfect stranger* causes a sensation of pain to the sensitive human heart.

Many here may have had to sorrow for a friend, a relative, who, far from kindred, far from friends, far from home, has been seized with illness, severe, perhaps fatal ; who, in a strange land, among strangers, has endured the pangs of suffering, the agony of death.

What is almost the first thought that strikes the tender heart, making the pulse throb with sorrowful emotion, causing the rising tear to swell the eyelid? Is it not the thought that the sufferer was alone? Poor dear fellow! we may say, how sad it was for him to suffer all alone? Would that I had been near him to smooth the pillow, cool the fevered brow, moisten his poor parched lips. If I had been there he would not have been so desolate. Doubtless other hands did minister to his comfort in his sickness, but we always feel that we could have done better, at anyrate it would have been more like home to have a friend to speak to. We acknowledge that in all probability we could not have altered the course of affairs and saved his life. But there is always just the chance, and this chance increases the pain we feel when we think of his lonely end.

Friends will comfort you, but they feel deeply with you in this. Be they religious or worldly, careless, or devout, every good specimen of humanity, every one with a tender human heart feels the sadness of a sufferer far, far away from living friends and home. Even foes would feel pity for each other in such a case, for although enemies they are fellow human beings, and desolation in suffering must always excite compassion.

Is it a wonder then, dear brethren, that we, when we meditate upon the Passion of our much-loved Lord and Master, should find in his *loneliness* a theme full of deepest sorrow—a subject we can partly understand in the tenderness of our human hearts? For we cannot realise His sufferings, pains, humility, obedience; they are far beyond our comprehension; but we can to a certain extent appreciate that sadness which grew out of His loneli-

ness ; and, indeed, made His heavy burden harder to bear : and, by bringing this *loneliness* well home to our minds, by meditating on this, we may perhaps increase our loving sympathy for Him in His sufferings, and so increase our love.

Think of Him, the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief. See Him in the midst of fearful pain and anguish, looking round for some to have pity on Him, for some to comfort Him, and hear His sighing words, "*But there was no man* : I have trodden the winepress alone."

Yes, all through His sacred life on earth, He had been, as it were, *alone* ; but the culminating point of His solitude was to be reached in His Passion.

Alone in the Home at Nazareth, alone in the Temple when a child He catechised the learned doctors. In the midst of crowds of followers, whether friendly or hostile, He was still alone—dependent on Himself to satisfy the curious, to comfort the sad, to heal the sick, to rouse the careless. He was doing His Father's work alone—unrecognised ; for we read that even His brethren did not yet believe on Him.

And then, when His disciples began to believe on Him, notice how He courted solitude. But even *then* we find Him spoken of as being *alone*, even when His disciples were with Him—alone on the mountain wrapped in prayer.

The populace, excited by His powers, began to believe in His mission ; they tried to force Him from His loneliness and make Him a king ; then again, He departed to the mountains *alone* to pray.

He prophesied too, the time when all His friends and followers—all those who believed on Him, and had by their faith made His loneliness less lonely—

should desert Him. "The hour cometh; yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every one to *his own*," see the lonely state of the prophet. *They* were to go to their *own*: that is, their *home*, while He was to be still a stranger, desolate, deserted; for, He continues, "And shall leave Me alone, and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me."

He endured the temptations in the desert, alone, and when the time came for His bitter agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, the Man of Sorrow was alone, but the climax had not been attained, for in both these cases angels, ministering spirits, came to console and to comfort Him. Nay more, He felt the comfort of His Father's love, "Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me."

But from this prophecy we can see that the Saviour was pointing to *the end*; although at the time of His prophecy He wished to comfort those who would desert Him, by speaking of His eternal, unending companionship with His Father. He foresaw the depth of what would be His loneliness when He became a reproof to His enemies, but especially among His neighbours; when they of His acquaintance should be afraid of Him, and they that did see Him without should convey themselves from Him.

Ah! His enemies mocked Him, "Thou that destroyest the Temple, save Thyself!" and turned their backs upon Him, and with a laughing jeer left Him to His fate. His acquaintances, nay, His *chosen* friends, His *companions*, trembled at His very Name; and one in very cowardice exclaimed, "*I know not the man.*"

Where is the valiant one, who in the garden was so brave, and drew his sword and fought so boldly?

Where is the boastful one, who, at the Eucharistic

board had protested so loudly, "Though all forsake Thee, yet will not I"?

Where are those He healed from sickness, cleansed from devils, snatched from sin?

Where are those He met in the familiar intercourse of private life? Where those He fed by thousands in the wilderness? those who thronged and joined in grand procession on the road from Bethany to Jerusalem, and made the mountains echo with their glad hosannas? Where are these?

All, all, have crept away in fear and trembling; all, all, have deserted the Friend, the Benefactor, the Guide, the Prophet, and left Him to suffer alone, left Him to *look* for some to have pity on Him. But, alas! there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him. And then when all His earthly friends had left Him, just as in olden times the high Priest alone went into the Holy of Holies once a year, not without blood, so now Jesus prepares to enter as the great High Priest, and offer once for all the Cleansing Sacrifice for nations past, present, and yet unborn. So now Jesus enters Alone. And at the portal of the sacred mysterious temple, at the foot of the Cross, may we not imagine the Blessed Master feeling His desertion by His earthly friends, raising His eyes and His aspirations to His Father's throne! "O go not from Me, for trouble is hard at hand, and there is *none* to help Me."

"Thou must tread the winepress alone!" Alas, alas, can it be that the Eternal Love is turned from the Blessed Jesus! can it be that such pleading, such suffering, such patience is unnoticed by the Almighty on His throne on high? Is such a cry to rise unnoticed, a cry of anguish at the prospect of entire desolation! Still, that cry was so *submissive*, so bending. *Not My will, but Thine.*

"Trouble is hard at hand, go not from me, there is none to help me," and there is none to answer. The Blessed One must tread the winepress alone, and then forsaken of men, He realizes what it is to be forsaken of God.

Oh! the loneliness of that sweet heart which burst out into the agonizing climax of desolation, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

We *know* that in His loneliness the Master uttered this cry—for we read it in the gospel—but there is a tradition that our Lord did not end His desolation here, but continued the whole of the twenty-second Psalm and recited it, and all the Psalms that follow, yielding up His spirit to His Father when He came to the sixth verse of the thirty-first Psalm, "Into Thy hands I commend My spirit." It is only a tradition, but still I think we shall find these Psalms (xxii.-xxxi. 6) most helpful to us in meditating on the Passion.

Read them sometime during this Lent, as if you heard your Saviour using them in His great desolation.

Beautiful indeed are the touches of *joy*, of *confidence*, of *certainty* you will find. The ring of gladness coming from the Sufferer's lips, "Lift up your heads, oh ye gates! and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is the King of Glory? Even the Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory." But the sadness keeps returning yet again and again. "Thou didst turn Thy face from me and I was troubled. Then cried I unto Thee, O Lord," "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

This feature in the loneliness of Jesus, viz.: *His feeling deserted by God*, is a point which has puzzled

most theologians to explain, and no wonder, for it is impossible for human understanding to comprehend how He, Who was one with the Father, of the same substance as the Father, should be thus deserted. Nay, more, it is hard to understand how that Sacred Being should even feel this loneliness, for we know from the ancient liturgies how the faith of the Church is that never for one moment were the two natures of Christ, the divine, the human, separated.

The divinity of Christ could not suffer—could not die, and yet in suffering and in death the divinity was united with the humanity. There was no separation of these natures for a moment.

The clearest explanation of this mysterious loneliness of Jesus seems to be that at this period of the Passion, the human nature of Christ received no assistance, no comfort, no strength, either from His Father or from the world.

“For,” says St. Jerome, “Christ suffered, the Word being quiescent; which Word, however, was not idle, but was present to His suffering human nature, so consenting to the Passion.”

It was *alone*, unconsolated by the Father's love, with the Word quiescent, that the man Christ Jesus suffered.

This was draining the bitter Chalice of suffering to the very dregs, when the Saviour had to bear His pains alone. We cannot tell how this isolation was effected, but we know it is a fact, because of the sufferer's words, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

“Who could believe it, unless the Lord had said it?” says a learned father; “Who could believe that the Heavenly Father could forsake His Son, and so to speak, forsake Himself in His Son? (who

could believe) that this could have been endured by that great love wherewith the Father loveth the Son? or that for our sakes the Father could have forgotten the Son, His only Son, God of God?"

So that He seems to have embraced us with greater love than His Son; us, His sworn enemies, than the Son of the same substance, the same divinity with Himself.

What can we repay for this love? nay, rather, the Son willed to be forsaken by the Father for our love; both that by this very forsakenness He might merit that the Father should never forsake us, and that He might make atonement for all the forsaking by which we, prone to every kind of wickedness, have left the Father, and have adhered to His most bitter enemy, the devil—have forsaken God our Maker, and enrolled ourselves among the ranks with the foe of our salvation; have forsaken the Lord that would reward us, and joined ourselves to him that would torment us body and soul for ever.

Yes, to save man from endless desertion is the Son of Man now forsaken, and in His Passion shows His mighty love for man by treading the winepress alone.

Does not love like this demand love? Can a heart be human, and not be touched and roused to an ecstasy of devotion in thinking of such suffering, such love? and all for me. We are each of us but atoms in the great creation, yet each one can claim that for him, for her, the Blessed One in His utter loneliness and pain died.

Sympathise with Him, now while ye may; and chiefly in this Lenten fast shew your depth of feeling. Shew you do grieve for His griefs, you feel for His sorrow, you weep for His pain, and chiefly

do you sorrow for His indescribable solitude, for His having none to pity, none to comfort Him.

But how can you best show your sympathy—your love? By your *devotion*, by your *earnestness*, by your *zeal*, by never deserting Him, who for your sakes was deserted; by never willingly taking service under any *other master* than Himself, by never letting the world, the flesh, or the devil, entice you from *His* sweet companionship, who loved you with a love so vast that He willed to feel the absence of His Father's love for love of you.

Strive then to love Him more, and to shew your love in your lives.

Beg Him to increase your faith, for as your faith increases, so will your *love for Him* more and more increase; and may the sadness of our Lenten fast vanish with the brightness of the joy of the Easter dawn, and find us helped, strengthened, uplifted, by our meditations on the Passion—find us nearer to Jesus.

PRAAYER.

OH, blessed Jesus, deserted by Thy friends, and for my sake feeling forsaken by Thy Father, draw me nearer and nearer to Thee. Fold me in Thy arms, dear Lord, and grant me never to forsake Thee. Come into my heart! the mystic garden of the spouse; make it indeed a garden enclosed, carefully shut to the world, but open for Thee. Let me seek in solitude with Thee, in the garden, the graces which are Thine. Let my beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits. Help me to prepare in the garden of my heart a delicious banquet for Thee! Help me to be alone with Thee, dear Jesus, in my garden, and in sweet solitude unite my heart with Thine for ever. Amen.

No. II.

Jacob, Type of Perseverance.

Gen. xxii. 10.—“*With my staff I passed over this Jordan.*”

IN taking Jacob as a type of the loneliness of Jesus in His passion, we, of course, do not intend to include in the resemblance any of those points in Jacob's history which are merely illustrations of a weak fallen nature, and which as such, could not possibly find any parallel in the history of the Perfect Man, the Man without sin. No, we shall only take certain prominent features in his life which shew his perseverance under the trial of isolation from his home. For this perseverance is a grace which shewed itself to perfection in our blessed Lord.

Whether we blame Jacob or not, for his share in the deception practised upon his father, it is upon this scene in his story that we must first dwell for a moment or so, as from that deception sprang the necessity of his leaving his father's home a lonely wanderer. There is only one view which seems to palliate and in any way to excuse Jacob's error, and it is this, he was obeying his mother, and he may not have given the matter due consideration, he may not have known the result that would follow, and in his great love for his mother he was obedient.

In fact, Jacob's love for his mother is the chief beauty of his character. We find another instance of it when he met Rachel; how, after claiming relationship with her on his father's side, he adds most tenderly a nearer tie, that his mother is her father's sister, and at this he wept for love. But, in the case of deceiving his father, we feel that his love has led him into weakness, if not into sin.

But still we gather from our Bible that the promise "that the elder shall serve the younger," was revealed to Rebecca *alone*, and consequently *she* knew that it was God's will that the blessing Isaac had should fall to Jacob's lot and not to Esau's. Isaac may have known it too, and if so, he was wrong in trying to frustrate the decree of the Almighty, by reason of his great love for his elder son Esau, and thus to beg him to prepare a feast and sacrifice, in fact, that his soul might pray, and be inspired to give to him the blessing: knowing, as he did, that the actual form of the blessing could only come by direct inspiration from God, after sacrifice and prayer.

The blessing was a prediction of future events, delivered by a divine impulse, echoing, as it were, the events already foretold by the Angel's voice, and consequently, some Jewish writers argue that Isaac knew quite well what was God's will in the matter, and secretly, unknown, as he thought, to his wife, begged Esau to prepare the feast, trying vainly, as it appears from the sequel, to frustrate the determination of Jehovah, by ensuring for Esau the blessing promised to Jacob. I have not much doubt but that this side of the question is chiefly advanced to shield Rebecca and Jacob. However, it is Josephus who makes the statement, and he certainly is a reliable authority, as not only learned and devout,

but also as a fair and just historian. So, if we accept this view, although we cannot excuse Rebecca and Jacob, still we find Isaac himself acting in a way quite inexcusable, in that he meditated attempting to alter what he knew to be the will of God; and thus we find cunning pitted against cunning, and of course the skill of the woman prevailed.

God prospered Rebecca's deceit because it was His will that Jacob should be exalted over his brother. So Isaac, after the supper, which was evidently a sacrifice, was lifted up in prayer to his Maker, and penetrated with a divine impulse from above, then he breathed upon Jacob the blessing already promised to the younger by the Almighty. Now this grand blessing given to Jacob, promised him a kingdom. It displaced Esau from his position as elder son, it disinherited him and elevated Jacob in his stead.

But what was this kingdom which was promised? Did it merely point to earthly state and grandeur, a possession which would fade and perish? Ah, no, it pointed to a kingdom everlasting in the heavens, an inheritance which could not fade and pass away, it pointed even to the glorious kingdom of the Messiah, that kingdom which was expected when Messiah should come, and which was the height of a Jew's idea of grandeur, and by our light now we can say it pointed to the Kingdom of Heaven, which should be won for many by Him Who should take His human nature from the posterity of him Isaac should bless, even from Jacob. See then the *grandness* of this blessing, Messiah was to come in his line, he the younger, by virtue of the blessing, became the elder, the first son, the heir of the kingdom Messiah should win.

Having then obtained the promise of future pros-

perity, immediately commences his ordeal. He has in the first place to fly from his own home to save his life. In the second, he has to dwell for a while among strangers, though his kindred, and among them find a home ; he has also to be a victim himself to deceit and fraud, and if we have before censured his weakness, now when he seems to become a type of the Messiah, we must begin to admire him for his persistence, his perseverance ; for to the end of his story until he returns to his home, we find him bearing up, and persevering, and persevering under such adverse circumstances must call for admiration, and at his return, his gratitude is so genuine. "With my staff I passed over this Jordan ; but now I am become two bands." "With my staff !" We first picture to ourselves the lonely wanderer turning his back upon his much loved home, leaving his father and mother and setting out despairingly upon his solitary pilgrimage. There is a mistake which is not uncommon to be observed at this point, and one that religious art has assisted to encourage. I mean we are often apt to fancy that Jacob in his youth, was thus forced into exile from his home. Nearly all the illustrations of this scene that I can remember, whether by the painter or the sculptor, represent Jacob a young man either at the commencement of his journey, or reposing in the desert. But of course the idea of his youth, though it might excite a greater amount of compassion, is quite a false one ; for Esau was forty years old when he married the wives that displeased his father, and that was thirty-eight years before Jacob by deceit gained his father's blessing ; so at his flight, Jacob must have been seventy-eight years old—in the *prime of life* in those old days, when the period of man's pilgrimage was more extended than now.

So we see in him, not a timid youth who might have cried himself to sleep at Bethel, but a man of mature years and thought, a man who felt his solitary position, and thinking of his isolation, might have doubted the value of the Blessing he had done so much to gain.

It was then, to comfort him, to encourage him to persevere, that God sent him a vision, "the ladder joining earth and heaven." Again, a staff, but doubled, a staff for angel ministers, a rod and a staff joined together bringing heaven near to earth. Truly then "Thy Rod and Thy Staff" comforted Jacob, though he knew not the glorious type, he knew not that that ladder signified the Holy Cross on which Messiah—of his line—should hang and die, and reconcile man to God, and give man a way to heaven.

Rising, encouraged by the vision, Jacob plods along. Years pass by, years of toil, years in which his wages were changed seven times. Then, as seven is the number of perfection, his trial was perfected, and he starts on his homeward journey, now no longer the solitary refugee, but a patriarch with a numerous retinue, with flocks and herds and wealth in abundance. And it is then he devoutly praises God, "With my staff I passed over this Jordan; but now I am become two bands."

Ah! dear Lord! what a poor type this is of Thy loneliness, for Thy loneliness was for me, for my sins, but his the result of his own.

Still, out of pure love for me, "Thou didst leave Thy home, and Thy Kingly throne," and as Man, lived among men.

For me Thou wert content to be despised, rejected, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief,

this grief which is so embittered by ingratitude, by desertion ; Thou felt this desolation for me.

There was no reason for the Blessed Saviour's loneliness but *love*, there was no cause for His *perseverance* but love, but the love was all *His* and His *Father's*. Weak man refused to be won to love Him by His love ; fear of punishment crushed budding love, and He, the Lover of men, continued isolated, unloved.

But, as at Bethel, so at intervals in the Saviour's weary walk of love, Angels came to remind Him of His Kingdom as though He were a man who needed reminding ; came to comfort Him in His grief, though He, determined in His perseverance, refused to be comforted ; came to cheer Him in His solitude, though He still persevered in suffering alone, and bending to His Father's Will, knowing that did another bear His burden, did another assuage His grief, the lawful sacrifice of Himself for sin—Himself the Lamb without sin—would not be complete, and thus He said, "Not My will, but Thine be done."

And then the bitter end draws near, another expulsion is at hand. He had left His Father's home in heaven when He came on earth to die, and now He leaves the Sacred City, Jerusalem, the Land the cause of many many tears. Without the walls they drive him, without the walls of the much loved City He is led to death. "With My staff I passed this Jordan."

Ah ! see His staff, the cruel instrument of His death—the Cross. Upon His shoulders now He bears this staff, not assisting Him in His dreadful journey, but weighing Him down, down even to the ground. See Him falling under His burden, and

see rough hands push away those who would seek to comfort Him, and roughly drag Him from the ground. And when at last they see that help is needed, another is seized to bear the Cross behind Him; and Jesus walks before alone, in the midst of scoffers and brutal soldiers, alone in the centre of a multitude.

Oh! in Spirit see that Jordan He had to pass; a River of Blood, flowing, fastly flowing from His head now crowned with thorns, from His limbs lacerated by the biting scourge, flowing faster when the nails pierced His Sacred Hands and Feet; a River of Agony as well as Blood.

See Him with His staff passing this Jordan, see Him on Mount Calvary—Golgotha's rugged cliff,—He has His staff in His hand; His staff supports Him now; His staff holds Him midway between earth and heaven. A true Jacob's ladder, a true Bethel; for here surely is the House of God, the Gate of Heaven.

But no comfort to the sufferer is His staff, for though it supports Him in His last journey, it is the instrument of His death. But still the *means* of His passing this Jordan, the means by which man's salvation is procured. Thus it is, we love the Sacred sign of the Cross; thus it is, we wear it on our breasts and sign it on our brows. We love it, because it is a proof of Jesus' wondrous love, the sign not only of the Saviour's suffering, but of man's redemption.

"With my staff I passed over this Jordan; but now I am become two bands."

As no one seeing Jacob flying from his brother's wrath--could have anticipated such wonderful success would result in twenty years or so--could ex-

pect the wanderer to return with a multitude, even two bands. So those who saw the Prophet of Nazareth dying alone could have anticipated nought but ruin to His cause.

But now the Loved One says, "I am become two bands." What are those two bands? Surely the kingdom that is His—the kingdom He has won—aye, purchased by His death. This kingdom is the Holy Catholic Church, divided indeed into two bands, two vast divisions soon to be united into one; Yea! two bands—the Church Triumphant in heaven, the Church Militant on earth. These are the two bands: His Body, of which He is the head.

This is the result of the patient perseverance of the Man of Sorrows, in treading the winepress alone; this is the reward He toiled for, the fulfilment of the blessing He desired:—the formation of a kingdom imperishable, which should be His very Own for ever.

Our time in the one band is a time of strife and warfare—of labour and sorrow—constant and enduring. Their time in the other band is a time of rest and joy. They have finished their course; they have fought the fight; by His might they have conquered. With them it is, "*Sorrow vanquished, labour ended, Jordan passed.*"

But we are still toiling on our earthly journey, nearing Jordan with our staff in hand. Toil on, dear brethren, toil on; faint not. The nearer you are to the river which you have to cross, the nearer you are to life. The nearer you are to home, the nearer you are to Jesus.

PRAYER.

OH, blessed Jesus, pour thy blessing upon us and give us grace to take up our staff, and boldly persevere in crossing *our* Jordan after Thee ! If our staff be a heavy cross to bear, give us strength to bear it, bid us remember Thee ! If our Jordan be troubled, cold, or difficult to pass, bring to our remembrance the River of Blood so dire and woe-ful, the Passion, the Agony, the Death Thou didst endure to save us, and give us Grace to try to imitate Thee, to follow Thee, to love Thee. Let us ever cry from our Heart of Hearts, "O gentle Jesus, meek and lowly of heart, make my heart like unto Thy heart, and give me grace to persevere. Amen."

No. III.

Gideon.

Judges vii. 16.—“*With empty pitchers and lamps within.*”

THERE seems at first some difficulty in taking Gideon as a type of the Loneliness of Jesus in His passion, for we read of him that he was not actually alone in his victory over the Midianites, but that he had 300 men with him. But virtually he was alone, alone in his great courage; and we shall find some other analogies even if we use contrast instead of comparison.

See the Jewish warrior starting off to fight, with an army of two and thirty thousand men. Hear the cry raised, “all ye who fear and tremble, get ye to your homes,” and see the army reduced to ten thousand. But still—as it was the Arm of God which was to gain the day—the force was too large. Gideon must be still more alone to prove that his success was entirely the work of Jehovah, and thus followed the scene at the river. Josephus interprets the incident in this way; he says, all those who were valiant and eager for the fray, threw themselves down on the river’s bank and drank quickly, so that they might march on again to the attack. The timid and fearful, thinking lest the enemy

should be near and should fall upon them unawares while they were drinking, raised the water in their hands, looking round the while for fear of foes. Three hundred thus drank, and these three hundred Josephus accounts to be the timid ones who had not liked to shew their fear when the others returned to their homes. But these three hundred are chosen to accompany Gideon, and thus we may account him in a sense alone.

But before we meditate on the stratagem by which the victory was gained, let us think for awhile on the preliminary incidents which gave to Gideon his great courage, and established it. For as these events made the issue a certainty to Gideon, we shall find a type of the Saviour's courage, although He required no frequent proofs to assure Him of the certainty of His Victory. Still, I think that as the certainty of victory gave Gideon courage to attack with 300 cowards the vast hosts of Midian, so it was the certainty of success which gave courage to the Son of God.

But notice the difference between *imperfect* and *perfect* man.

Look at Gideon. First his mission is established by God's acceptance of his sacrifice. He asked for a sign and the sign was given, and his mission is to him as the decree of God. In proof of this he casts down the altar of the false god, erects another, and offers sacrifice; but still the imperfect man, though not lacking in courage, is not convinced of the certainty of his success. Two other miraculous acts have to be witnessed before he is quite sure of his power to conquer. The second, stranger than the first—as the first *might* have happened without Divine interposition; the second not. For moisture rising out of the ground might have

damped the earth around the fleece without necessarily wetting the fleece. Whereas the dry ground and the dripping fleece could only be the result of a miracle.

But still in his imperfection he is wavering slightly—not quite convinced. Does it not seem strange that after such repeated (thrice repeated) proofs of God's favour that still he should not feel certain. Notice how he does not *speaks* his doubts, but God reads the heart and sees his doubts, and then came the dream.

He wandered to the tent and heard the dream and its interpretation, and then, and not till then, did he feel quite sure that God would deliver Israel by his means.

The one little cake speaks of solitude. It was he who had to do it alone, although a band of men were with him. Ah! and so did Jesus show His courage alone, but no need for Him of miraculous proofs of the certainty of His success, no need for Him of miraculous deeds to strengthen Him in His great courage. His courage was shown in His prayers before His passion, His courage displayed itself in His refusing the help of men or angels in His great straight. He prayed the cup might pass from Him if possible. It was a bitter cup to drink, but He always showed His courage by His termination, "Not My will, but Thine be done."

He was perfect man, and as perfect man needed not the certainty of His success to be *established* by wonders; and thus in His great solitude—alone—He displayed His courage. But Gideon required proofs to make his courage strong, because he was imperfect man.

Doubtless, Gideon at the head of his great army of two and thirty thousand, felt his courage rise,

felt that even though the hosts of Midian were so vast, still, with God's help victory might be his. But when he saw his forces diminished until reduced to the little band of three hundred, we do not wonder very much at his requiring some extra revelations to cause him to persevere. The courage which perhaps began to fail was restored when he was initiated into the fact that the enemy feared him. This Jesus knew full well from the first, and thus His courage never failed.

Ah ! brethren, see the Blessed One on that road from Gethsemane to Jerusalem with His friends at first around Him, one even fighting in His defence ; the air too filled with angelic legions ready at a word from their Master to rescue Him from His foes. See the cowardly band sent backwards, see the valiant band of angels also dismissed ; no help will He have now. He shows His vast courage alone, none must be with Him to give Him courage—save, not three hundred as in Gideon's case, but the three, the loving three who followed Him onwards, onwards, until when the end approaches, when the battle is about to be fought, the attack to be made, they stand at the foot of the Cross, while the others watch the end from afar. These three, dear brethren, *were not timid* ; indeed, by their presence they showed their courage, but they were *powerless* to assist Him. And thus He showed His courage against the enemy alone.

We find yet another parallel to these three hundred followers of Gideon. At early dawn when the fight was over, we see the three Marys coming to the tomb to tend Him Whom they would have assisted if they could. And now they find not even the Body left for them to anoint, for in His mighty courage He has outstripped all, has made the

assault, has vanquished the foe unaided and alone ; and now—His victory gained—they find but an empty sepulchre. And the angels, unable to conceal their joy, demand, “Why seek ye the living among the dead?”

By His rising, by His victory He has restored courage to His followers ; they are led now to *look up*. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above,” says St. Paul, and the Blessed Lord, as both setting the example of courage and giving this courage to His own, says, “I, even I Myself, am He that comforteth you.” But He had to leave us, He had to return to His Kingdom, and first He had to burst the bands of death. “*I Myself* will awake right early,” of My *Own* power, as it were, and *right early*, so early that the prophecy of the three days and three nights was just and only just fulfilled. So eager was the Victor to return with the spoils of His courage and His triumph to His Own.

But notice now the stratagem by which Gideon gained his victory, and in the first place observe the strength of the enemy that had to be overcome, as a hundred and twenty thousand were slain, and probably many thousands may have escaped by flight. The force was a large one to be attacked by a little band of three hundred men ; also the camp covered an immense area of ground, for they had large numbers of camels which in camping require space ; also they had different nationalities, each one probably not understanding the language of the other. And thus they would rigidly observe the difference of nationality by pitching their tents in separate groups, necessarily extending the camp. I think we may therefore conclude that in the great circle which formed their camp, they were arranged

by nations and covered a large area of ground. It was night and all were wrapped in sleep, when stealthily and noiselessly, three little bands of a hundred men each approach their different points of the great encampment with empty pitchers and burning lamps within, and a ram's horn as a trumpet. At the given signal when they broke their pitchers, and with lights exposed, blew a blast of defiance on their ram's horns; the confusion—which resulted in ultimate defeat—commenced in the ranks of the enemy, for being raised from sleep they mistook friends for foes, and not knowing the Hebrew language, fancied all those whose language was unknown to them to be Hebrews, and a fearful slaughter took place. And it was when the Israelites heard of Gideon's victory that they took their weapons and pursued the foe and completed the slaughter.

Now, brethren, a very mighty foe was he whom Jesus our Lord was to conquer, and this a stratagem was used even the same as Gideon's, the empty pitcher and the lamp within. It was he *Devil and his army* that had to be vanquished; the *last enemy*, the powerful ally of Satan. Death would be destroyed by *dying Himself*; death would die, and thus death was the last enemy to be destroyed. But the crafty enemy had to be taken with guile, was to continue in his presumption in the confidence of his own strength until the end, was to continue to try the valour and the courage of the Son of God to the end, which he would not have dared to do had he known perfectly that it was God who he was tempting and playing with his pains. The suffering of Jesus had to be completed, had to be prolonged until the actual moment of His victory, the time when He yielded up His Spirit to the Father and

pronounced His work finished. And thus it was that the Lamp of the Divinity was concealed within the empty pitcher of the Humanity, only to be revealed when the Pitcher was broken on the Cross. Then at last shone forth to the now terrified foe the Bright Light of the Godhead, so bright that devils trembled at their awful sins, and men who witnessed the fearful end said, "Truly this was the Son of God." How beautiful is this parallel related in an old Easter carol—

"With pitcher and with burning lamp
He marched to storm the invader's camp ;
Our own, our Royal Gideon.
The mortal pitcher shattered sore,
The Godhead's Lamp to ruin bore
The vanquish'd host of Midian."

Yes, it was there where the pitcher was broken, the glorious light of the till-then-concealed splendour of His Divinity was revealed, revealed to the utter confusion of devils, to the joy of man, the true Israel.

Now it is that man must imitate the thousands of Israel's ancient army, and seizing their weapons, rush eagerly with the fray and attack and slay those whom our Gideon has overwhelmed with confusion, has routed and dispersed: now it is strengthened by the courage of our Master, we must be courageous.

No fear of sorrow, pain, or death weakened His courage; not even when the terrors of death came upon Him would He brake the earthen pitcher until He had drained the chalice of His Passion to the dregs. He *had courage to live as Man* and conceal His Divinity even though such a revelation would have ended His sufferings, stopped His agony. Oh, what true courage was displayed in this One enduring such grief alone! With a word I say, He could have revealed Himself as the Light

of the World, God of God, and at the very commencement of His Passion have routed His foes. But no, He had to die as man ; the pains had to increase more and more in intensity, and so in His great *courage* He willed for a little longer to conceal the lighted lamp within the pitcher. "For it became Him for Whom are all things and by Whom are all things, in bringing many Sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation *perfect* through suffering."

Oh ! let us love Him for His wondrous love for us, that love which gave Him the courage to endure, even to the end, when His pains were multiplied beyond our comprehension ; and which, in a moment, He could have caused to cease.

Learn to practise courage—real courage. Shew this courage by bravely bearing troubles—ah ! and by making troubles for ourselves to bear—I mean, by *doing things for the good of others*, which are burdensome to us. Brethren, we are one with Christ, and Christ with us ; thus we too have the Spirit of God within us. Let *us* break at once the earthen pitcher of our depraved nature, and cause the Light of Divine Grace, the influence of the Holy Spirit within us, to shine forth. Let us break the pitcher by penitence and fasting, by prayer and charity ; no longer let carelessness or sloth dim the brightness of our soul, but let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father in heaven.

PRAYER.

OH, blessed Jesus, let some portion of Thy courage be ours, for Thou art one with us, and we with Thee. Make our love for Thee cast out *all*

fear of our enemies. Let the knowledge of Thy strength cause us to despise the hosts of evil ones arrayed against us. "Oh, send out of Thy divinity, Thy light, and Thy truth, the truth of Thy humanity, that they may lead me, and bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy dwelling"—even heaven! Amen.

No. IV.

Samson.

Judges xvi. 3.—“ *He took the doors of the gate of the city, and went away with them.*”

HOW ready we are to admire a hero who through his courage, his skill, and his strength, has accomplished some great end, and our admiration increases in intensity when we learn that our hero wrought his work *alone*, with none to counsel, none to assist him. The *loneliness* of Jesus has roused our deepest sympathy, His courage our admiration.

In modern times this feeling shows itself in rendering all the respect and all the reward possible to the man, who by his bravery has benefited his nation, and doubtless it is this feeling which influenced ancient mythology, taking strength and courage as the necessities of heroism, and taking the *height of heroism* the *perfection* of strength to be found in the entirely independent action of their hero. The ancients modelled for themselves after the pattern of Samson, one, who by his valour and might prevailed *alone*, unaided, over every form of trial, every kind of enemy ; for there can be little doubt that the history of the Hebrew hero Samson, brought over to them by foreign traders, suggested to the ancient Greeks and Latins the idea of Hercules.

This seems likely from many points of resemblance in the two histories, for example : Samson slays the lion, so does Hercules, and they both were brought to their deaths by the treachery of their wives.

And one other incident in the fable of Hercules tallies curiously with, although not exactly similar to the history of Samson. It is told by an old Greek writer, who in describing a scene enacted during Hercules' captivity in Egypt, tells of a time when high festival was held, and Hercules decked with garlands gay was led forward to be sacrificed to the gods; how he patiently endured for a while, bearing the insults and not resenting the blows, and then suddenly recovering his mighty strength, burst his bands and slew them all.

From these similarities some people have ventured to doubt whether Samson's story is not also a myth, and whether the later myth of Hercules is not merely an expansion of an older one, but it is certain that such a conclusion is *most* incorrect, for there is a supernatural element pervading Samson's life which cannot be detected in the tale of Hercules, and which cannot be explained away; and although the later legend has in it many points similar to details in Samson's life, still, it is the opinion of all those who have thoroughly sifted the matter, that although the one is merely allegorical—a myth composed in honour of might and bravery—the other is indeed historical.

The history of Samson learnt by the ancient heathens roused their admiration, and led them to manufacture for themselves a character which should be as perfect and as noble, as mighty and as brave as their knowledge would allow; and having created the personification of what they deemed

perfection, after submitting this mighty creation of theirs to an intensity of labour and an intensity of suffering, they made their hero pass through much tribulation up the slopes of Olympus, and then be reckoned among the gods. The myth shows the ancients' reverence for what they deemed virtue ; it shows how they respected bravery, honoured might, and considered them the proper attributes of God, and also that such characteristics in a *man* raised him above his fellowmen and ensured for him a grand reward.

We honour the heathen for his appreciation of what is noble. We feel interested in the myth as giving us an idea of what they, in those crude old times, considered perfection ; but we accept the history of Samson as a fact, although even his history was written probably centuries later than the events recorded. We accept this history as a fact most interesting to us, far more interesting than ordinary historical facts, because in it we can find some types of our Blessed Master, and throughout the whole story, we can recognize the finger of God Who gave strength and power to One He had chosen for His Own.

If we want any direct proof of the authenticity of this Life as a real matter of history, we find it in the New Testament ; for an Apostle would not have illustrated His teaching by referring to a myth, and St. Paul in alluding to Samson, classes him among those who "through faith waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of Aliens," while in connection with all his mighty acts we read of the direct influence of the Spirit of God. It was this—the Spirit of God—which gave him all his supernatural strength, and consequently we read how at the commencement of his judgeship "The Spirit of

the Lord began to move him at times." Again, when bound with cords, "The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords became as flax burnt with fire;" and at other times—too numerous to notice—when in his contests with his foes, we read that the victory was gained by the working of the Spirit of the Lord within him. This—the source of his power—is I think the first point of resemblance, as a type, of Samson to our Lord.

The source of his power was the *Spirit of the Lord*, and how constantly in the Blessed Saviour's life we find the strengthening influence of the Spirit alluded to by Himself, as for example in S. Matt. 12, 28, where our Lord distinctly suggests that by the Spirit of God He cast out devils. Again, it was the Spirit that led Him to the wilderness to be tempted, and here we note a difference; He in His Own strength conquered, for joined eternally with the Father and the Spirit, in that temptation the humanity had to assent its perfection, and consequently as in the Passion, the Deity was passive though consenting to the suffering. So in the temptation, the Deity was not tempted, did not share in the work of resistance. This was the work of the perfect Man, Christ Jesus, Who alone unaided repelled the foe, and won the fight. "*With His Own right hand and with His holy arm hath He gotten Himself the Victory.*" This difference, viz.: that Samson's victories were accomplished by the *Spirit of God*, and that the victories of Jesus were won by Himself alone as *perfect Man* without the assistance of Divine aid; that He as man willed to be tempted, and as man to prevail; as man He willed to suffer, as man to die. This difference, I say, teaches us how vastly superior His strength was Who was able of His *Own* might to overthrow the enemy and vanquish His foes.

It was when Samson trusted in his own strength that he began to fail; but when Jesus, refusing to cry for aid—refusing the legions of angels who longed so sorely to help Him, trusting in Himself, very man and very God, but trusting in the perfection, determined to fight *alone*. It was there He gained strength. “Put up thy sword,” He said to him who would help Him, and in His solitude He showed His strength.

Samson had to be humbled when he boasted of his strength, he had to be made to acknowledge that his strength was not his own, but God's. In his exultant good spirits after victory, he went about singing a joyful song, “With the jawbone of an ass, have I slain a thousand men.” Boastful, exultant, he continued to sing, when God humbled him, and sent upon him the fainting feeling caused by thirst, and bent him to His will; making him confess that he was but a poor frail human being after all, and obliged to bend before the Will of His creator, and thus he drank the water greedily to revive his fainting spirits. But Jesus, after His great conflict lasting forty days, was hungered indeed, but did He satisfy that hunger when the tempter saw His famished state; oh no, His strength was greater than any other strength, even than Samson's. In His case, to revive His fainting human nature, would have been submitting to the wiles of His foe, so He refused: His mighty Will, determining to bear His fast yet a while longer; and thus He showed His strength. Many other illustrations we could find to show how wonderfully the strength of the Son of God, exercised in solitude, or at least without assistance, far surpasses any strength of man, even though the strong man was assisted by the Spirit of the Lord; but none

more so than the incident of which the carrying away the Gates of Gaza is a type.

“He took the doors off the gates of the city, and went away with them.”

Can we not picture to ourselves this mighty warrior caught by guile, and locked up in the city, while extra guards were set at every gate, and strong precautions taken everywhere to prevent his exit; can we not imagine him laughing to himself, in his self-permitted prison, and rather enjoying in his mind the idea of what the feelings of his captors would be in the morning, when they should find him gone, and their city's gates gone too.

It was to *save himself* he tore down the brazen gates from their iron hinges—to save himself he tore away the posts and gates, and passed the astonished guards, who were too amazed to offer any hindrance to the mighty man.

But it was to *save himself*. This is the great difference we find here when we seek in this incident a type of Christ; for He did all to save *us* and not Himself,—nay more, He willed to die that we might live.

By His death He burst down and carried away with Him the portals both of heaven and of hell; or rather I should say, by His death He carried away the gates of hell and by His Resurrection He burst open for man the gates of heaven.

Oh! how marvellous to us must have been that carrying away the gates of hell by the Saviour. See, He is dying—almost dead—about to enter what the writers call Hell, our Limbus, the place of departed souls; not a place of torment, but as St. Peter teaches, a prison—well! He is to enter the prison by

the proper course of circumstances a prisoner, but no prisoner will He be; He is to enter as a conqueror to set the captives free.

The old Church legends are filled with wondrous tales said to be collected from the words of those who rose at His Resurrection. They picture the prison of the souls at the time of the Blessed One's great trial—the Prince of the Powers of Darkness in dismay, and feeling that *his* time is over. The Prophets and the rest in prison feeling joy and gladness at the certainty of their redemption. And then—without the gates of hell—a wondrous sound as of mighty winds, for vast was the multitude of Angels crowded round to see the triumph. “Lift up your heads, oh ye Princes, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.” And then the Prince within said, Nay, shut the brass gates and make them fast with iron bars, lest we be taken captive by this Nazarene. And then the Saints began their song—“Open thy gates that the King of Glory may come in”; and David cried aloud, Did not I truly say, “O that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men. For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.” And thus, with many more instances from the Prophets and from David in the psalms, the ancient legend depicts Christ's entry into Limbus and His bursting through the gates of hell. And the legend is fully authorised in idea at least by our Creeds,—“He descended into hell.” And by St. Peter's words—“He preached to the spirits in prison.” What was the hell that He descended into but the prison in which the Saints were kept until He should come in person to redeem them? the preaching that He made in that

short sojourn among the souls of the dead. What was that but teaching them how now their prophecies which they had uttered in years gone by had now one by one been fulfilled—that He Himself was the One they had prophesied about, and that now He had come to set them free and lead them into Paradise?

We find no place of torment meant by that descent into hell—we find merely the advent of a Conqueror who bore away the gates of hell in His Own power, in His Own might; unaided and alone He had this work to do, and in the perfection of His mighty power He finished His work of pain with joy. And then the other gates had to be carried away—even the gates of heaven—shut and closely barred to man, forbidding entrance to a fallen nature—guarded vigilantly by the Angelic host, frail man could find no entrance there. But at midnight there was a cry raised—the Bridegroom cometh! the Bridegroom cometh! And He came, and with His Own power thrust aside the golden portals admitting to the kingdom those He willed. Oh the might, the strength of Jesus in His loneliness. Alone He suffered, alone He died, alone He conquered, alone He burst down the iron gates of hell, alone, that is by His Own power alone—for He had a crowd accompanying Him—and this I say, *alone* He entered heaven.

What strength, far surpassing any strength ever known on earth, was that which unassisted could perform such wondrous acts! could snatch from Beelzebub, those who He thought would soon be His, and passing through the angel guards could force the way to Paradise? Must we not admire to the utmost of our ability strength like this? Must we not admire a power so intense that nothing in

earth, in hell, in heaven, could stand against? Conquering and to conquer. We saw the Man Christ Jesus descending into hell, and now we see Him marching triumphantly towards heaven, and all with His Own power, His Own might, repassing the legions of angels, who were ever ready to assist Him should He summon them to His aid. But *no*, with His Own right hand and His holy arm hath he gotten Himself the Victory.

He bore away the gates of hell. Why? to protect His holy Church, that the gates of hell should never prevail over her—should never shut themselves again to enclose His faithful servants in a place where ruin every day seemed imminent; a place where devils were, a place in sight, perhaps, of the yawning gulf of everlasting perdition.

He bore away the gates of heaven, opening the door of Paradise, that ransomed souls might enter in redeemed by Him, and enjoy repose until the final trump of God, when the destinies of all should be determined. Ah! how we see *our* Samson shewn in the Mighty One, Who in His strength alone fought and conquered for us, in dying slew our enemies, and saved us from our foes by causing their destruction. Trust in Him the Mighty, strong to save; He now is mightier stronger than before, He now is at the right hand of God, exalted in the majesty of His beauty, ready to help and succour the weak; call on Him and He will hear you, ask of Him and He will answer you, there is a portal still left at heaven's gate—it is but a wicket—knock and He will answer you, and He will let you in. Trust not in yourselves for strength. Trust in Him, the Strong One, and then you will prevail. Bring your troubles to Him and ask Him to *bear* them, for He is strong. Bring your sins to Him and ask Him

to forgive them, for although He is strong He is merciful. Throw your whole burden of sins, of troubles, of difficulties, of perplexities, at the foot of the Cross in humility and love, and gain strength from pardon. He is so good, so kind, although so strong, and He will never despise our weakness.

PRAYER.

OH, blessed Jesus, with Thy strength help our weakness. Thanks be to Thee, dear Lord for our redemption. Thanks to Thee for the promise of Heaven. But now, dear Lord, we are weak, we need Thee our Strong One still, to save us, to help us, to encourage us, with Thy love. We know Thou art with us, and this is comfort to our souls; for we feel that if we trust in Thee we must prevail. Keep us stedfast in this trust, for the mighty ones of this world fail and are defeated in the fight, but if we trust in Thee we shall prevail over our direst foes, ah ! even ourselves.

No. V.

David.

I Samuel xvii. 40.—“*He took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook.*”

IN the story of the exaltation of David from the sheep-folds to the throne, we find numerous striking types of the Life of the Good Shepherd—the King of kings—when on earth.

But in no part of David's history do we meet with so many parallels to the passion of Jesus, as in that portion in which is narrated his contest with, and his victory over Goliath the giant.

For taking Goliath as the type of the devil, the champion of the armies of fallen angels—the personification of sin, and seeing in David his conqueror—we may naturally, and without any fanciful interpretation, without any great stretch of the imagination, expect to find in all the details of this event, in every *little incident* even, a type of something that occurred in that actual battle of our dear Lord with the Devil which took place in His Passion,—nay more, we may expect to find types of the solitude of Jesus in His Passion.

For David single-handed fought against the

giant, single-handed he obtained his triumph, single-handed he displayed that steady *trust* or confidence, a type of the virtues which we find so nobly displayed in our Lord.

Of course I cannot pretend to point out *all* the similarities—and, doubtless, you may think I miss some points which are self-evident—but it is impossible to exhaust a subject; and, indeed, it would make me tedious did I attempt to do so. So I only pick out the points which seem most important to our meditation.

First, notice the Philistine giant defying the armies of the living God.

“I defy the armies of Israel this day--give me a **MAN** that we may fight together.” Oh! the irony of that contemptuous cry!

The men of Israel—from the king downwards in that vast army, are in a state of the most abject terror: and when they saw the mighty man of valour they fled from him—they were forgetting the mighty works of God in olden days, and their *trust* in Him was weak.

But at last a man appears, a **MAN** is—given to the giant to fight with him. David approaches—*sent by his father* to see how his brethren fare.

See, at the very onset, the commencement of the type. For God the Father “so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,” and again, “God *sent* not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

Then David hears the insulting words of Goliath—and began to wonder why some man did not come forth to do battle with the Philistine—and he kept on asking, *What* shall be done to the man who conquers?” So boldly does he speak, even as though he were at once going up against the enemy.

So bold were these enquiries, that the brave youth's words offend his brethren—and Eliab his eldest brother takes him in hand and rebukes him.

Thus did St. Peter, the chief of the brethren of the Lord, rebuke Him when about to commence his attack on the devil.

David, however, undaunted by rebukes, still demands, "What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine?" and then again the soldiers tell him the reward. "He shall be *enriched with great riches*, he shall have the *king's daughter for his wife*, and his *father's house shall be free* in Israel." A threefold reward of sweetest symbolism, "All these things will I give thee, viz: the glory and riches which thou seest if thou wilt worship me," had been said to the Saviour, and the Holy Sufferer spurned the mocking tempter from His side. Not in that way would such wealth be His, not in that would He gain His kingdom, but by slaying the tempter, who by sin had enslaved the world and made it as his own. For now the earth is the Lord's won by him, in His victory over the devil, and thus in conquering *our* David is enriched with great riches. The second reward, *the king's daughter for his wife* is not less clear. She who is the bride of Christ, "the spouse of Christ in arms, contending o'er each clime beneath the sun." The *holy Church* is here symbolized, the king's daughter who is all glorious within, whose clothing is of wrought gold. She when the triumph is completed, shall be "brought unto the king in raiment of needlework; the virgins that be her fellows, shall bear her company. With joy and gladness shall they be brought and shall enter into the king's palace," ay! even the palace of the King of kings. This is the second reward for slaying the giants and we

are much interested in the promised espousals, for we are members of that Church which Jesus loved and gave Himself for, "*that he might present it to Himself a glorious Church.*"

Yes, it is a sweet thought that we, *if we are true*, are part of Christ's reward in this His Bride, that we with joy and gladness shall be brought to the king's palace. See, the reward of the conquerer is our reward as well, for those who have been torn and wounded with the thorns of this life, shall be healed and beautified by Him who wears the crown of gold in that life. We who have feebly endeavoured to follow Him along the road of obedience here, shall be received to the king's embraces above. Oh what joy and gladness then prevail. The king's daughter, coming from a far country to her heavenly bridegroom, cannot tell the wonders, the joys, the glories, the perfection of bliss, that the true Solomon has prepared for the soul, that like Sheba's Queen comes from afar to behold his glory. Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what He has prepared for them that love Him. So we have our joy in the second reward of our David, for we, collectively, are the king's daughter, his spouse.

And, no less in the third reward—*His Father's house should be free in Israel*. For this reward reflects its blessings on us—we *inherit* the freedom from sin by being brethren of Him, Who, by dying, freed the world from sin—by Baptism made us sons of God, heirs of heaven. We are of His Father's house, nay more, He Himself has taught us to call His Father *our Father*, and thus as His reward *our freedom is secured for ever*.

But it is at this point of the story of David, viz., when, having heard the reward, he expresses his

determination not only to fight but to conquer—that his *trust* and *confidence* are most apparent.

The king discourages him; and he tells the king of past victories gained over a lion and a bear, and that he knew that the Power which helped him then would not desert him now.

The king tried to arm him for the conflict, but he was already armed—his armour was trust in God; his weapon, the weapon that God should give him. He refused the assistance of any ordinary means of human warfare, such as helmet and cuirass, to protect him from blows—sword or spear to inflict blows. But in the Name of God—he, in his solitary weakness—went forth to meet the mighty champion of the Philistines.

Strangely enough it was at winepress-tide that David went forth to meet the Philistine. For *after* his victory he wrote the 8th Psalm—"O Lord, our Governor, how excellent is Thy Name in all the world"—which psalm is dedicated to the Supreme at winepress-tide. So we see at this special season of the year David advancing alone to fight, and we see a mystical allusion to him who trod the winepress alone. Well! let us follow David as he leaves behind him the whole host of Israel and alone descends the hill to give battle to Goliath.

A little brook, or torrent as it is sometimes rendered, has to be crossed. Doubtless David stoops "to drink of the brook in the way" to refresh him for the coming struggle, and then leaning on his stout staff he picks up five smooth stones from the bed of the brook, and placing them carefully in his wallet advances towards his foe.

Notice the *derision* of Goliath, the *confidence* of David—"I come to thee in the Name of the Lord

of Hosts." Probably that stone which David flung so bravely and which sank into Goliath's forehead only stunned him, for when he fell we read how David taking his enemy's own great sword completed his victory by severing his head from his body. These are two most mystical allusions to the passion of Jesus, and chiefly to His loneliness.

See Jesus crossing the brook to the garden where the fight commences; see Him later on bearing His staff which, when we were thinking about Jacob, we found to symbolise the Cross; see Him taking up the five smooth stones from the brook of suffering, agony, and pain, even the five holy wounds in His feet, His hands, and side. With these weapons he still advances *alone* against His enemy.

David used but one stone of his five to slay his foe, Jesus uses *four*—the mystic evangelistic number; perhaps signifying by this that through the preaching of His Gospel His victorious work would be carried on until the end of time.

Look at the Sufferer on the Cross—does He look like a conqueror? Does He look like a king? As a king He wears a crown: but it is of thorns. As a conqueror His triumphal chariot is the Cross. Bitter mockings and revilings, instead of the shouts of joy from the multitude, and just now, a reed for His sceptre. But still He is conquering—with those smooth stones; although He is suffering, He is confident; although He seems weak, He is certain of success.

David's help in his battle came from God—so does the Blessed One receive His help from God—but He is God, and His trust and confidence in His success is His Own. Ah! His Own in His

perfect humanity. The bystanders are reviling—"He trusted in God, that He would deliver Him." He did trust, He does trust, although He well knows that His victory to be complete must be gained alone.—Think, brethren, the consolation to us His children here on earth, is this mighty confidence He then displayed. For our help comes from Him—and comes from the result of this, His terrible single-handed encounter with the devil. Our help is in the *Name* of the Lord. Our help in temptation comes from Him thrice tempted in the wilderness. Our help in weariness from Him who slumbered safely in the storm. Our help in poverty from Him who though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor. Our help in distress of soul from Him who being in an agony prayed more earnestly. Our help in death from Him who Himself died on the Cross.

But did those smooth stones the Saviour brought with Him as His weapons slay the foe? Oh no! they only stunned him.

We can picture to ourselves the devil watching for the end, and thinking his victory sure. For it could not be that *if* this prophet were indeed God's Son, that he should consent to suffer such indignities, such pains, and death too seemed to be very near, and God He knew too well could not die. But stunned was the devil, at the acts of the Blessed One upon the tree. He heard him call the Mighty God His father, He saw him use His Cross as though it were a throne, and exercise His kingly power and promise e'en eternity of bliss in His kingdom to the penitent thief.

But he was only stunned, and there was no sword in the hand of Jesus, to slay the giant He had

felled to the earth by His holy wounds. So he took the sword from the devil, he drew the giant's sword from its scabbard, that weapon with which Satan ever since the fall had used so successfully against man, even death and dying—slew his foe, or as the old hymn runs—

“Now David's son, and David's Lord,
Hath faced the giant dreaded,
And with Goliath's own great sword,
Goliath hath beheaded.”

Oh, wondrous victory. He Who seemed so weak has proved himself the Strong One. He Who seemed so nearly beaten proved the Conqueror. Think of the *agony* of the Conqueror, these wounds of His, all through His battle, are causing Him fearful pain, and yet His confidence of success upholds Him. He knows He will win the fight, and alone and unaided He bears up against His agony, knowing that His very agony is confusing His foe. For the Devil knew that God could not suffer, and yet he saw this Prophet, who claimed to be God, suffering. He knew not yet the mystery of the Incarnation, and so he was confused by the increasing agony and the increasing endurance of the dying Prophet. He saw the trust and the confidence displayed, and he wondered who this Man could be.

Is not this to teach us trust and confidence, to teach us never to despair. We have to fight against more than one giant alone—but with His assistance we shall conquer. Let us learn then *real trust in Him* from His great trust. For oftentimes when we think the battle against us, some sin all but lost, it is in reality nearly gained—another blow—and our enemy would have been routed. *Trust induces perseverance, perseverance ensures success.* For we *must* succeed if only we

persevere. Whatever be our fault that we are striving to conquer, we *can* conquer if we trust in Jesus.

And then the Rewards which are in Jesus' hands will be given to the conqueror—nay, we shall be given to Him, for His own, as part of His reward. Redeemed—ransomed by Him—strengthened by Him to overcome; and “to him that overcometh,” says the Great Conqueror, Who conquered in His might alone, “will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne.” Let us then be trustful like the youthful David. Let us be confident like our Master, and let us fight until we overcome. One smooth stone out of the brook is enough for us to gain the victory with, if we fling it with zeal against our foe. Penitence—real penitence—stuns our enemy and takes away his power of hurting us, but not of tempting. But it deadens his temptations and helps to make them harmless. Sling this stone, like David, with full force against the giant's brow, and then holding fast the Cross of Jesus as your sword, bid defiance to sin. Death—the Devil's sword impends over your head—but you know that your true David has vanquished death, you know that the bow-string of death *is* sin. But sin absolved—blotted out in Jesus' blood—death is but the entrance into life eternal: the abodes of bliss supernal where the due rewards await all those who have overcome.

PRAYER.

OH, blessed Jesus, David's Son and David's Lord,
King of royal David's line! We have seen
Thee on Thy earthly throne exalted: reigning from

the Cross, with crown of thorns about Thy bleeding brow. We see Thee now, *the conqueror*, having ascended Thy Father's Throne far above the heavens, crowned with glory. Grant *us*, Lord, also grace to conquer: grant us skill to use the five smooth stones, of Thy most sacred wounds, against the giant who would destroy us, that we may overcome and obtain Thy promises. "To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I overcame and am set down with My Father in His Throne!" Amen.

No. VI.

Jonah.

Jonah i. 12.—“*Take me up and cast me forth into the sea.*”

WE should hardly have ventured to take as a type of the Saviour's loneliness a prophet who through a kind of cowardice had fled from the city he was ordered to condemn, and had refused to pronounce the doom which God commanded him to pronounce, unless the Lord Jesus Himself had alluded to Jonah as a sign of Himself, and unless the disobedience of Jonah had been caused by his thorough knowledge of the infinite love and mercy of God. But as the Lord spake of Jonah as a type of Himself we may profitably meditate on the events we know of his life, and may probably draw some lessons which may help us.

In the first place we feel a little inclined to *excuse* Jonah, for he was but man, and as an ordinary man he thought more of the fulfilment of his denunciations rather than of the great mercy of God. He thought more of himself, I should say, than of the glory of God shown in mercy, and he feared being treated with contempt by the people—treated perhaps as a false prophet when, on their repentance, his prophecies were not fulfilled.

Jonah apparently was vexed with God, not that God should be merciful, not that God should forgive—far from that. But he was vexed that God should choose him to predict punishment which upon repentance would not be inflicted. He did not know that the Ninevites would repent. He did not know that God would so inspire his words that they would burn like coals of fire into the hearts of them that heard him. But he did know full well the *mercy of God*. He knew that God was so loving, so tender-hearted, so kind, so forgiving, that if they *did* repent, he would reverse his sentence of punishment, and give them a free pardon. And so he refused to pronounce the coming destruction of the city. Of course his disobedience was wrong and is much to be blamed, but still, seeing the cause, we cannot help praising Jonah for his great *faith* in the mercy of God, although we are obliged to blame him for his pride, which caused him to refuse to become an instrument of God's love, by turning—through his prediction of woes impending—the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.

Oh! what a strange contrast we find here in our type to Jesus, for the teaching of Jesus always held out hope, always encouraged sinners to repent—to turn to Him. It was always with Him—"Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." He longed for their turning, their repentance. "I am come to seek and to save that which was lost," he said—not to condemn and destroy. He certainly pronounced the doom of those who refused to hear, but all who listened and repented were promised life.

But Jonah seems only to have longed for the fulfilment of his prophecies, the execution of the

sentence he pronounced against sinners. He seems to have had no sympathy with sinners themselves, to have felt no longing for their conversion, their salvation. He seems to have been willing to preach *destruction* if destruction followed—not unless. This then is the difference we find—the Saviour sought out souls to save them; Jonah sought out only to *condemn*, and therefore knowing the loving-kindness of God towards man, Who, if man will return, is always ready to forgive, knowing from the history of his nation the multitude of instances of God's forbearance, knowing, as a prophet, that these instances were not exhausted but would continue "till the end of time," he fled, and refused to expose himself to what he fancied might turn to ridicule, by pronouncing a sentence that might be revoked by the Almighty.

And when at the second time, awed by his experience, humbled by punishment, made obedient by the knowledge that resistance was useless against a power so mighty as his God's, when—at this second time—he went and preached the Fall of Nineveh, even then he got quite angry with God; when the people having listened to his preaching were touched to the heart, and from the king to the beggar, began to bring forth works meet for repentance. I say he was angry with God—instead of rejoicing—that God had made him an instrument for the salvation of some of His people.

Oh! what a vast difference there is here between the type and the reality. For in Jesus we find all love, all kindness, all gentleness, all forbearance. We find Him, the Good Physician, seeking to heal the sick in sin—He has but one end in view—the *salvation of souls*. His messenger had gone before Him with His eager cry, "Repent." He follows

with the same cry as His watchword, but He too—as the Baptist did—longs for a *response* to His cry—*longs for penitence* in those He addresses, and rejoices at the return of even one lost sheep.

He seemed to think the *lost* possession far more desirable to recover for His own, than the one who was already His, and remained in security. He would even, as He tells us in His parables, leave what He knew He had for a while in safety, and go to seek for what He had lost until He found it. And *His* joy, He tells us, at the recovery of one lost soul, is felt by the *angelic host*, even as an addition to their transcendent joy. He grieves at the hardness of heart of those He comes to save, and even to rouse them from their stubbornness in refusing to listen to His Words. He brings forward *Nineveh* to rebuke them, whose inhabitants, He said, repented at the preaching of Jonah. But behold, He adds, a greater than Jonah is here. They shake. Ah! the confusion of those who have now *refused to hear* the Son of God preaching daily in His Gospel, in His Sacraments. How great will their confusion be in the end—when the penitent Ninevites are admitted to the Kingdom, and they themselves cast out.

“They that go down to the sea in ships and occupy their business in the great waters, these men see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep. For at His word the stormy wind ariseth.”

Thus Jonah, flying from the face of his God, in his folly, was to experience the presence of God, aye, and the *mercy* of God, even in his flight.

Alone he fled, choosing out a ship to sail in manned by strangers, and seeking concealment even from the sailors, he prepares to start on his strange

journey. For we must think it strange that a prophet knowing God's omnipresence should even fancy for a moment that he could escape from Him. Doubtless the real meaning is that he was flying from Nineveh, hoping, by putting the sea between himself and that great city, that he would not be required to pronounce a doom which would not be fulfilled in his time.

But strange as Jonah's flight from God seems to us, we do see sinners now who try *to fly from the face of God*. Those go down, as it were, to the sea, viz.—the pleasures or the cares of this life; they leave far behind them the solid land of peace, and of humility. They occupy their business in great waters, in toil, and perhaps for gain, for wealth, or else in excess of earthly joy and pleasure. But even there God does not leave them. Even there, in His infinite mercy, He stretches out His hand to guide them. Even there He brings before them His *wonders*—even in the great deep—the deep of the sins, and turns them to sorrow and penitence.

But Jonah, to be more alone, has hid himself from the men on board, and is sleeping calmly while the storm increases, and idolaters tremble—and then it was that the ancient form of faith of always supposing that where there was *great trouble* there must be *great sin*, began to work upon the minds of the heathen mariners. We know how this belief was prevalent among the Jews, for, in the man born blind, we hear the disciples asking the Master *by whose sin* his blindness was caused.

And thus the lots are cast to discover the sinner so that Providence may remove the punishment, and bring them safe to shore.

And then it is that Jonah, although knowing him-

self in the wrong, trusts in God's mercy, and displays that beautiful spirit of *self-sacrifice* which touched the hearts even of the heathen sailors. "Cast me into the sea." They repent at first, but as the winds grew strong and the waves more boisterous; after the prayer—"Lay not upon us innocent blood," they cast him into the sea, "and the sea ceased from her raging."

Ah! in a manner the lots had been cast for Jesus outside that dreadful judgment hall. 'Twas then the violent mob, excited by the priests, determined by their voices the one who was to suffer. "Whom will ye that I release unto you, Barabbas or Jesus Who is called Christ? And then the cry resounded *Barabbas!* And then the exclamation of Pilate—"I am innocent of the blood of this Just Person." The blessed Jesus is delivered unto His enemies, condemned to death.

"Save me, O God! for the waters are come in even unto my soul!" Like Jonah, Jesus allowed Himself to be cast into the sea to save those who were with Him in the ship. And He came alone in that *wonderful spirit of sacrifice* to the deep waters, and the floods ran over Him.

The deep waters, ah, how deep!

Think of the height from which He had descended, when leaving His heavenly kingdom, leaving His *dominion*, His *throne*, He became incarnate, and dwelt on earth. See the greater depth of those waters when from earth He descended still lower, even into the whale's belly, penetrating into Hades. For not only do we find a type of the *Resurrection* in Jonah's restoration to the earth after three days; but we see in Jonah's spirit of self-sacrifice, when he alone was ready to perish to save *all* who were

with him : in this we see a *willingness to be sacrificed*, which the blessed Saviour, in His mighty love, displayed alone—a spirit which is reflected from Jesus on all His saints, who, out of love for Him, are ready and willing with St. Paul, not simply to be bound, but to die.

But the love of Jesus was identical with the heavenly Father's love—vastly different from the love of the saints for their Master ; for these love One Who loved them so dearly, while He expended His love on those who were rejecting and despising Him. Aye, He, in His mighty love for His persecutors, prayed for them, excused them, even at the time when they were doing their utmost to torment Him. His willingness to be *the* sacrifice for sin was caused by His intense love for the souls of man lost in sin.

And though we hear not His voice, “Take Me up and cast Me into the sea,” still in His humble resignation we see Him permitting this act.

The troubled sea of God's wrath and anger against fallen man, rages mightily and terribly. The waves thereof leaving punishments to sinners—temporarily at present, and unending in eternity—toss man's frail bark about unceasingly, and threaten destruction to the ship. The waves grow higher, and the wind more boisterous, as man continues troubling the waters of God's wrath by continued sin. Sickness, sorrow, disease, and death, the fruits of sin for this life, the knowledge of impending doom, of outer darkness, of a never ceasing flame, and the prospect for sinners unrepentent, unredeemed ; when our Jonah uprising from his grievance by his Father's throne, looking at the troubled sea of God's wrath against fallen man—by actions,

even although not by words, suggests, take me up and cast me into the sea.

See ! they have taken him up, raised him on high, as they, unknowing what they do, offer that sacrifice which is to oppose the wrath of an offended God—and calm the troubled waters of the sea.

Not tenderly do they lift Him, for He wills to suffer, they are killing Him by slow degrees, even as they raise Him to cast Him into the sea. But then there is a *great calm*, a wondrous quiet and stillness, even more strange as it succeeds such raging stormy weather. And *man* can feel his ship gliding now smoothly on the waters of God's love ; His wrath appeased by the perfect sacrifice of His much loved Son, and there is *hope* (nay more the hope is a certainty), that man can, if he will but persevere, reach the haven of safety, on the shores of heaven.

Oh ! thanks be to Jesus, Who, in the solitude of His passion, becomes the willing Sacrifice to restore fallen man to His Father's favours. One thought more, dear brethren, and I have done. The merits of His great sacrifice avail equally in present troubles and distress ; Ah ! in *present sin*.

For even if the waves of the sea, either of trouble, sorrow, distress, or sin, or temptation, are mighty and rage horribly, yet the Lord who dwelleth on high He—Who began to reign upon the Cross on Calvary—is mightier. We have the merits of Jesus' Passion to cast into the sea—to calm the troubled waters, and to salve our troubling hearts with cheering words of "Peace, be still."

It may be, that it is good for us to be tossed about roughly on the waves of life ; but we know in His good time He will rebuke the waves and bring us

into calm waters of peace and rest, if we will only "trust in His redeeming grace and seek to serve Him well."

PRAYER.

OH, Blessed Jesus, the willing Sacrifice! Thou hast left Thyself to me—to offer to Thy Father. Be Thou to me my Beloved, and let me see Thee, as the Bride did, white and ruddy. Let me see Thee white as the lily, because Thou art purity itself; as ruddy as the rose, because in Thy Passion Thou wert covered with Thine Own Blood, which Thou sacrificed Thyself for my love. In all my troubles let me offer Thee—the Son in Whom the Father is well pleased—to our Father; let me offer Thy *merits* for my *demerits*, Thy *graces* for my *imperfections*, Thy *love* for my *coldness*, Thy *perseverance* for my *apathy*, Thy *devotion* for my *luke-warmness*; and let the waters be calmed by Thy love. So that I may sail safely towards Home.

The storm may have been fierce,
But what of that;
Safe home, safe home in port,
Rent cordage, shattered deck,
Torn sails, provisions short, and only not a wreck,
But Oh, the joy upon the shore, to tell our voyage-perils o'er."

No. VII.

The Triumph of Jesus' Loneliness.

S. Matthew xxviii. 20.—“*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*”

IN this our last meditation we shall have to look forward beyond the dark season of Passion-tide to the glories of the Easter morn, so that we may be able to appreciate the greatness of the triumph of the Loneliness of Jesus. For although triumphant throughout His passion, although every grace which could adorn man appeared in its greatest perfection in the lonely Man of Sorrows, although we find the perseverance of a *Jacob*, the courage of a *Gideon*, the strength of a *Samson*, the confidence of a *David*, the self-sacrifice of a *Jonah*; and if we had time to *multiply* types we could find illustrations of every virtue which is considered admirable among men and apply them to the Blessed Lord Who, in His own Person, displayed collectively all those graces which we find described in Holy Writ, and each one perhaps only found to perfection in one example. But in Him we find all. Although the wondrous triumph of Jesus in His loneliness, which proved Himself the *Perfect Man*, must seem to us a *wondrous triumph*, still that triumph was not yet completed—the loneliness

of the Man of Sorrows still existed. He was, though triumphing, triumphing *alone*—by His Own power, without friends or father to comfort or console Him; and thus we, to realise the perfection of His triumph, will have, before we conclude these thoughts to-day, to look forward to His *Resurrection*, to His *Ascension*—for then was *loneliness for ever banished*—then was the grand triumph won by the loneliness of the Blessed One in His Passion completed.

Mighty indeed was the triumph all through the Passion, for this was a constant recurrence of complete victory—victory won in solitude. There was victory over grief and sorrow, victory over pain and suffering, victory over trials and temptations, victory over bodily weakness, thirst, and death. But in all these mighty conquests the Conqueror was isolated, alone; having apparently no reward as His portion, no friend or neighbour to share His triumph, no knowledge of a loved one's voice to congratulate Him on His success. The *sympathy*, the *love*, the *friendly greeting*, the *happy smile in the true friend's face*—all were absent to the Blessed One in His triumph *then*. He was triumphing alone, deserted by His friends, forsaken by God—He had nowhere to look for pity. Ah! and when He conquered by dying, nowhere to look for congratulation. In His Own strength He had to continue His triumph in loneliness, until His triumph was perfected and complete, and that would not be until He had burst the bonds of death, and by His Own power raised Himself from the tomb.

Then was the triumph of the Man Christ Jesus perfected, then the rewards of the Conqueror are given, then is loneliness banished, and everlasting companions allotted as His reward.

For as He was before deserted of men, forsaken of God ; so now after His triumph over death, He is even united with His earthly brethren ; His children, living in this world of ours, were joined with His eternal Father, and the Blessed Spirit, in sweet communion, everlasting love. Which communion, although even existing, yet for a while He had willed *not* to strengthen Him. For He had willed to work His work alone—in the perfection of humanity to permit the perfect offering to appease the Father's wrath. But that appeased, He resumes His place at the right hand of the Father. And now, oh, what a triumph, as *very man* as well as *very God*.

The Man Who suffered in His loneliness, and consented to be forsaken by His Father, is now seated by His Father on His Father's throne, never again to experience loneliness or solitude.

As His loneliness in His Passion was two-fold, so is His triumph. In His Passion—deserted of man, forsaken of God. In His triumph—always with man—a friend, councillor, guide, companion, *food*. Always with God—King of kings and Lord of lords. Never again to suffer ; never again to feel what it is to suffer alone : for to man He says —“ *Lo ! I am with you always, even to the end of the world.*” And of His heavenly home He says—“ *I go to My Father.*” He knows not loneliness now, for His triumph is complete.

The most happy feeling which must rise in a Christian's heart at one part of the dear Lord's triumph—I mean His perpetual companionship with men—this happy feeling must be of never-ceasing comfort to us all.

He is with us, even to the end. Ah, what triumph,

dear Lord, did Thy loneliness in Thy bitter passion attain ! What a blessing for me, and all who, like me, tread this earth of toil and trouble. Never can I feel solitude like Thine ! Thou hast blotted out this desolation from the world : Thou hast obliterated the sense of isolation from our souls ; for if we look to some to have pity on us, even in our direst trouble, there is even Thyself ready to be merciful. Thou art with us, even to the end of the world. It is only sin that can drive Thee from us ; and even then at the first penitent sight, Thou art ready to hear and to forgive.

Oh, what joy and comfort this presence of Jesus is to the living Christian soul ! It is a foretaste of heaven to thoroughly realize this ! For the great joy of heaven is the ever-abiding presence of God, and here we find the Saviour telling us that, *even on earth*, even to the end of time, He is ever with us. We have His ever-abiding presence—let us think of this, brethren, for a moment or so, and let us see this as a result of the Passion, or rather part of the triumph of the Man of Sorrow, Who now gives joy to fainting hearts by His never-ceasing presence.

Yes ! part of the triumph of His loneliness is *His ever-abiding presence with His friends*.

“Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.”

He is with us *now*, in the reality of His Mysterious Presence, although our eyes are closed so that we do not see Him. But He is with us, even as He was with those Apostles in that upper room ; even *before* their eyes were opened, and they saw Him present in bodily form. He is with us now, I repeat, *for He is the truth*, and we are gathered together in His Name ; therefore, though we see Him not, He is in the midst of us.

But not only is this presence of the Master confined to Christian gatherings,—He is with the *individual*, He is “*always* with us.” We may forsake Him, but He will never forsake us. We may drive him from us by sin, but even then if we seek Him we shall *surely* find Him.

In our daily walk of life, not only in our prayers is He with us; unseen, doubtless, but nevertheless actually present with us.

“Ah!” the Master may say, “You left Me lonely in My sorrow, in My trouble, in My pain; you left Me to tread the Winepress alone. But in all your trials, in all your troubles, I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you. This is *part* of *My triumph*, that though unseen, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

To realise this is the perfection of human happiness, for the soul which thoroughly realises the truth of the constant presence of the Lord, is raised from earth and things of the earth; and if, in the weakness of mortal nature—if, in the human shell of perishable dust—inclinations rebel, and recollection entices—if, in short, the flesh continues the war against the spirit, and sometimes, off her guard, the hasty word, the angry word, the unkind word (or whatever may be the form of temptation) is yielded to by the soul within, even then the *realisation* of the Master close at hand to turn to, leads the soul *at once* to penitence—leads the soul at once to pray for help and pardon; for although *in* the world when worldly allurements succeed in, for the moment, entrapping her—she is not of the world, for realising the presence of the Dear Master at her side, she thinks more of His kingdom. She uses the world, and she enjoys the blessings that the good God provides and thanks

God for them ; and these blessings become sweetened to her, in that she receives them as gifts from her Lord—and she tries by obedience and love, to merit not only these temporal blessings ; but also those eternal ones which shall be hers in the kingdom of heaven. The *knowledge* of the presence of the King of that kingdom by her, is for *comfort* and *encouragement*. And thus man on earth ever requires as that result of the dear Lord's Passion, promised in the dear Lord's words, "Lo, I am with you always."

We must not forget one point. It seems hardly necessary to mention it to you, but you might fancy it had been carelessly omitted if I did not allude to it. I mean the Sacramental Presence of the dear Lord. For this wonderful presence, in the great memorial of His Passion, is one triumph of His loneliness and desolation. It is a greater triumph than that ever-abiding Presence to which I have been alluding, for that is external, whereas this Presence is both *external and internal*. Both these presences of the Lord are discernable only to the Eye of Faith. The unbeliever knows not either. But the faithful follower of the Master, believing, without demur, *all* He says—perceives a *reality* in that Sacramental Presence—perceives *his Lord* and *Master* although His Majesty is concealed. A Lord and Master whom he can touch and feast upon, under the elements of the Eucharist, and though he cannot see the actual form of Him he tries to love and serve ; still the faithful soul *knows* his Lord is there, and that He rejoices in Eucharistic adoration.

That worship of Jesus on our altars has ever formed a vital part of the Christian religion ; while the feasting at the Heavenly Board is the highest

privilege of man on earth. See at this point how the Eucharistic Presence is one of the *greatest triumphs* of the Loneliness of the Lord in His Passion. *Then*, desolate, forsaken, He had none to cheer and comfort Him—alone He bore His pains, His death.

He has conquered, triumphed in His Loneliness, and He wills never again to be alone, even on earth in His Presence among His Own. He wills that Presence to be *perceived*, the influence of that Presence to be *felt*; and thus in the Sacrament of the altar He comes into the souls of those who feast in love and faith—comes into their inmost souls, becomes one with them, and they with Him; taking up His abode *with* them as He had promised, as a return for love. Some have asked, "How long does this presence of the Master abide with His faithful servant?" and the answer ever is, "As long as the servant wills."

Consent to sin alone can drive Him from our souls. Do not *misunderstand* this, dear brethren; I say *consent* to sin alone drives Him from us, for *temptations* strong and wearying to the flesh and spirit, if *resisted*, bind him closer to us; for as we cling to Him in our dread of offending Him, so He holds us closer to Himself. Ah! even if a soul wavers for a moment in a bitter trial, but *checks* the thought of evil before it is matured, he has not lost his Saviour's Presence,—nay, it was that Presence which gave him strength to resist and cast away the thought before it became sin. But it is most dangerous to waver, even for a moment, for hesitation in resistance is the first step to consent, and if the soul consents to sin she drives away the presence from within her, for Jesus cannot dwell in a soul which has admitted

a sin—that sin must be cut off by penitence, and then the cleansed soul can again receive her Lord as her guest in sweet communion. Thanks be to Jesus for leaving us this means of grace in His Church, by which we can never be alone in our fight if we strive to love Him. May He give us all grace to show our love by keeping His commandments.

The complete triumph of the loneliness of Jesus in His passion, namely, the entire banishment for ever of the *possibility* of the loneliness of any of His servants: this is attained only in heaven. For here on earth, although He will not forsake us, still we have power to forsake Him; and, alas! too often we are sensible of a laxity in our devotions, a carelessness in our religious duties, which suggest to us that we are not keeping as close to Jesus as we ought to do. But in heaven, as there is no more temptations there can be no more sin, and sin being non-existent, the ransomed soul will be *ever* with the Lord—without the possibility of ever again losing the fulness of the *Beatific Presence*.

Faith in our Eternal Home when peace and quiet reign, and *sweet companionship* of men with angels and their king triumphs for ever over loneliness and desolation—faith in the certain fulfilment of the Master's promises, Who told us of the Father's house with its many mansions, nerves the Christian in his greatest trials. "For," he asks, "what are these trials when compared with the glory that shall be revealed?" With this confidence he may exclaim with the Psalmist, "I should utterly have fainted, but that I verily believe to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

Yes, many slips, and many failures would damp

the ardour and quench the zeal of frail man, did he not know that he now but sees *in part*, that his perfection here cannot be quite perfect; did he not know in very truth that there is a land of the living when perfected—purified he will be at rest. “*I should utterly have fainted.*”

There is *certain security* in this hope.

Certainty of life eternal, *security* in seeing the goodness of God; a hope which keeps poor frail human beings from utterly fainting in the long-enduring struggle between the Spirit and the flesh, for we believe in the land of the living, we believe that we shall see that land—the land of life, unending and eternal—full of the goodness of the good God; and, although eye hath not seen nor ear heard the glories of this land, yet the heart trusting in God as a loving Father, believes that that land contains all pleasures and bliss that can satisfy each individual soul, and thus she longs for home and faints not under present trials. She pictures to herself, feebly perhaps, the joys of the blessed, the wonders and pleasures in store for the elect in the land where loneliness is ever banished, desolation is unknown. For *there* in the land of flowers, the eternal springtide of bliss, the Prince is ever with his subjects, “whose joy is aye serene.”

Now, in the time of Sacraments, we see through a glass darkly. We know in our faithful hearts the reality of that Blessed Presence of our God, but we can have only a slight idea of what His visible Presence really is. For now, though He is with us, His royal Presence being too great for mortal man to bear is veiled in humility under the forms of the Blessed Sacrament. He is with us veiled in those veins of grace which flow through Holy Church

and ever abiding keep them in her vitality and holiness—veiled under holy influences which came upon us, we know not how—veiled under virtues which imperceptibly grow in the souls of those who love Him : an unseen presence of the Master working for good in His members, and confirming them more and more to His likeness.

But still unseen, still veiled, still hidden. But *then* in the city of gold we shall see Him face to face, we shall see Him in His beauty, we shall see Him in His glory, we shall see Him on His Throne.

Oh ! does not the *trusting* soul, though well-nigh fainting under the trials of this life, *revive* at the thought of life eternal.

Does not the faithful soul love to meditate on the joys of union *with the Master* in the home of all who love Him—of union *with the dear ones who have gone before*, in the mansions of the blessed—of that sweet intercourse, so pure, so holy, and withal so full of deep and perfect pleasure. Yes ! the soul is strengthened, comforted, encouraged ; aye, she is saved from fainting on her road by thinking of that Glorious City, the Heavenly Jerusalem, where once again we meet never again to part ; where sadness, sin, and pain, and death, exist no longer ; where the fruits of the Triumph of the Blessed One's Passion are freely given to His faithful servants.

PRAYER.

OH, Blessed Jesus, the Conqueror seated on Thy Throne ! and yet ever with Thy Church on earth, Grant us to realise Thy Presence here ;

grant us to venerate that sweet memorial of Thy Passion—to rejoice in Eucharistic adoration, so that feeling Thy ever abiding Presence here, living constantly to be with Thee *when Thou comest in Humility*, we may attain to the joys of Thy kingdom when Thou comest in Thy Majesty—and ever dwell with Thee in Thy Father's house, with Whom, &c. Amen.



